Table of Contents

1. *prophecy*
2. *prologue*
3. *chapter one*
4. *chapter two*
5. *chapter three*
6. *chapter four*
7. *updated prophecy*
8. *chapter five*
9. *chapter six*
10. *chapter seven*
11. *chapter eight*
12. *chapter nine*
13. *chapter ten*
14. *chapter eleven*
15. *SAD NOTE*
16. *chapter twelve*

prophecy

A dragon awaits

With a secret you may find

If you search till the edge

For a land in the sky

One who holds great power

One who shakes the clouds

Find the sun ray of hope

Or all the tribes shall drown

This hope you will find

If you go to the sea

Hurry hurry,

Or you will no longer be free

PLEASE READ: If you are reading this and you haven't read the first book in my wings of fire fanfiction series, I would highly

suggest doing so! It will tell you about the start of the plot, the characters, half of this won't make sense if you haven't read that! Also, again I'll say, this is just a fanfiction, I am not trying to rewrite the wings of fire series but Tui.T.Sutherland, and some of the characters are hers, most are my creation though.

I will update the prologue as soon as possible!! xx

prologue

[image]

6 years ago...

Cove was bursting with happiness. *I'm an animus!!* She had thought. The Talons of Power ceremony had just concluded, and Cove had just found out about her hidden power.

Cove decided she would do good things with her magic, not bad things like they did in the war of Sandwing Succession. She knew the first thing she wanted to do. She knew it was possible. Cove was going to make someone else an animus.

Cove knew this was a very unusual this to do, but she wanted to share her gift with a dragonet, she had the power to make their life special too.

Cove swam as fast as her wings and talons could carry her. She sped through the grand opening of the Deep Palace, greeted by Queen Anemone's most trusted guards.

"Hello Princess Cove." The Guard on the left flashed in aquatic. He had deep blue scales, and many scars. Princess Cove continued swimming past, ignoring the guards welcoming. She had to fulfill her mission before anyone noticed she was gone. She swam to her sleeping quarters, and ditched all the items she was carrying in her pouch at that moment, and swam back out.

Soft sunlight was creating a warm glow in the ocean, making the shell-like walls glimmer. Cove rushed back out the entryway, again ignoring the guards and had finally reached the fresh salty air of the beach.

Cove mentally revised the Pyrrhian map in her mind. She was closest to the rainforest, or the Mud Kingdom, but she wanted to do something else.

I want to enchant a Pantalan dragon, they can't have animus magic. Well, they soon will.

After a few days of flying, Cove had finally reached the Pantalan peninsular. The sky was pitch black, faint stars shining in the distance. Everyone would be asleep; it was the best time of the day.

Cove descended onto the grass quietly, being careful not to make a sound. She peeked around the corner. The guards were not there, which meant she was lucky. She silently walked around the village, everywhere was full of trees and little homes, Cove thought it was quite cute. After a few minutes of snooping around, she was standing in the doorway to the Silkwing hatchery. The light was dull, a small yellow light coming from a lamp on the roof. All the eggs were white with small specks of colour, all nearly the same. Something was wobbling below her, and she looked down quickly, hoping it wasn't an already hatched dragonet. But Cove was relieved when it was just an egg. It was about to hatch. This egg was slightly different to the rest. It was white like the others, but was rainbow on the very top and the bottom. Cove had this odd feeling that she ought to go and wake up the dragonet's parents, but she had to keep secret. She reached down and scooped up the delicate egg. She rested the weightless shell in her talons, and closed her eyes until everything faded to black.

This is it, go on... enchant it... a voice whispered in the back of her mind. She smiled. Times to change another dragonet's life.

And I can't even tell anyone about it...

Cove knew that if she told someone, she would be hated. They would all make nasty remarks, like, 'how could you ruin a dragonet's life like that?' or, 'you could be making another enemy!' Cove was aware of all the things she was risking right now. But she just had this strong feeling in her heart that this was the right thing to do, but she didn't know why.

With her eyes still closed, she focused really hard on what she would like to happen, and the whispered.

"I enchant the dragonet in this egg to be an animus, with the same

abilities and rules as a bloodline born animus would have."

Done... Cove opened her eyes and laid the shaking egg down. The dragonet inside would either have an easy life, being able to have fun enchanting things and making jobs easier, or would be banished and would be alone, not knowing what to do. Cove sighed, hoping this was the right thing to do.

Suddenly there was a crack, and realised the dragonet was breaking out of its egg. She scurried carefully away, hoping that the parents were on their way to meet their newly hatched dragonet.

Cove lifted off into the sky, the sun was slowly beginning to rise, the dark blue and orange filling the rest of the black star speckled atmosphere. She flew fast back to the deep palace without another look back, she didn't want to be asked where she went. Since she was a princess, her mother would notice that she was gone instantly. This was scary, she had just potentially made a big threat to Pyrrhia without even knowing it. Animus dragons were dangerous and the magic was not to be messed around with, but Cove just knew, she just *knew* that somehow, enchanting that particular egg, would one day make a change in the world. She didn't know what, but she knew in some way, it would.

LATER ON

Cecropia hurried to the Hatchery. It was happening. It was happening now.

And I'm the only one to witness it.

Her mate Bamboo had died not long ago. Cecropia was devastated. They had met in the Rainforest during the second war with the Breath of Evil. At first sight, they had instantly fell in love. Her tribe had hated her for being together with a Rainwings, but eventually they had gotten used to it.

Cecropia stared up at the two full moons, the other barely visible. She had just seen something, or someone. She had to blink a few times to check if she wasn't hallucinating. A pale blue Seawing was flying away from the hatchery. She wanted to call out what she had

been doing, maybe call the guards? But Cecropia ignored it, the Seawing would be long gone before she could reach anybody.

Cecropia stepped into the dimly lit hatchery. Her egg was cracking and shaking right below her, she had just made it. She lifted it up in her talons, and watched it mesmerised. And after one big *crack,* her beautiful dragonet popped out.

At once, Cecropia felt something highly strange about him. He had this odd aura, but she couldn't tell what. She had only felt this feeling once before, and that was when someone had used magic in the war. She stared down at her dragonet. *He* couldn't have magic... Pantalan tribes didn't have any animus dragons. But she was sure they would new. Her Silkwing and Rainwing dragonet would be the first. She looked at she soaring dragon in the sky, and wondered if she, somehow, had anything to do with this.

I know the last prologue in Warm Sunset was also a hatching, but I felt like both times were important. Hope you like it! *Now* I'm going to have a break for a while, now that you guys get your first chapter, you might have to wait a month or so until the next one...

chapter one

[image]

Sorry the pics blurry, it was funny but the only one I could find ;D

Atlas was pacing through the clouds. This day couldn't have been any worse. His feelings were mixed between Cosmo and Sunset, the two dragons he loved most. He was holding a grudge against Cosmo right now though, she had assumed he had criticized her, but really, he was just telling her the clear truth, so now the two weren't on speaking terms. And to top it all off, Sunset had somehow magically disappeared and he couldn't find her.

He hadn't bothered asking anyone, if he couldn't find them then they probably can't, and he wouldn't dream of asking Cosmo to help him right now, that would be like saying to her, 'you know things I don't, even though I said you need to know more' which would pain him to say, and he could just imagine the evil-like smile she would give him.

Atlas sighed. He didn't know what to do. Sunset could be out there right now, suffering... and Atlas was having trouble deciding how to ask for help?

"Atlas!" A voice behind him called out. Atlas swirled around and saw a Hivewing standing their beckoning him. Bumblebee smiled when they caught eye contact and Atlas made his way towards her.

"What's up?" Atlas asked, sounding slightly irritated. "Have you seen Sunset?" Atlas had finally built up the courage to ask, and waiting hopefully for a reply. "Oh, didn't Cosmo tell you? She went to go get some information from her parents... She said she'd be back soon." Bumblebee said with a small laugh. Atlas felt rage swelling up inside him, but he tried not to show it. He'd been worrying all this time, and the whole time, Cosmo was out telling everyone where Sunset had gone, except him? Atlas sighed and nodded then began to walk away, but was stopped again.

"Atlas... I just wanted to ask you, well, how do I put this? Are you actually on our side now? Like, you won't betray us again?" She asked shyly, and Atlas seriously wanted to knock everything over in anger.

"Are you serious? That wasn't my choice what I was doing! Blackice was forcing me!" Atlas yelled at her, not able to hold his annoyance in any longer.

'Oh yeah?" Bumblebee sneered but not unfriendly. "You're the one with animus magic!" She said waving her talons dramatically. Atlas closed his eyes and sighed. He knew she would say that. "Bumblebee, Blackice was threatening me. He has more power than I do, well, in some ways... Somehow, he got his talons on a Dreamvisitor. He's been haunting my dreams ever since he found out I was an animus. He wanted to use me... And I'd had enough of it, he told me he'd stop using the Dreamvisitor on me if I joined him... But he didn't..." Atlas said, letting everything out. Bumblebee pouted.

"Oh, oh Atlas. I'm sorry. We never knew..." Bumblebee said. Atlas shyly smiled, and turned to walk away, his tail sliding on the ground behind him. Atlas remembered all the things Blackice had threatened him with to force him.

'I know where your mother lives, I can kill her if you'd like, maybe you don't love her enough... Join me and prove your loyalty...' Blackice sneered in Atlas's asleep mind. Atlas was running away from him, trying everything he could to get away. 'No, not my mother' he thought. Cecropia was the only form of love he had ever had before he came to Jade Mountain... 'No!' Atlas screamed over and over again, looking towards the snarling Icewing behind him. An excruciating pain erupted through his body, his scales were freezing, he was dying. Blackice had sprayed frost breath on him. The pain wasn't only in the dream, but outside his mind, Atlas could feel the pain, but it wasn't harming him. Atlas was screaming in pain, both inside the dream and out.

Atlas woke with a start, panting, gasping for breath. His scales hurt, but he looked down and no ice was on them. Sunset and Cosmo were standing there, horror-struck expressions plastered on their faces.

"W-what happened?" Sunset asked, her voice shaking in shock. Atlas knew, even while he was still dreaming, that he was screaming in his sleep. Atlas had felt the pain outside the dream too, causing his scales, even now, to ache. Atlas brushed them away. "Nothing happened. I'm fine." Atlas said as he lit a small torch behind him for some light, and pulled a scroll out of his bag and began to read. Cosmo and Sunset looked at each-other. "I'm fine," Atlas repeated.

"Atlas, you can't deny that you were screaming... Tell us... We're your friends." Atlas suddenly felt hot, his scales were turning red, he knew he was blushing, He faintly smiled in Cosmo's direction and she smiled back. Atlas had always had feelings for Sunset, but lately he had begun to love Cosmo, too much than he thought necessary.

"Okay, fine, I'll tell you." Atlas said bluntly, still not knowing whether it was a smart idea to tell them he'd had a nightmare, but he knew he was being dreamvisited, it wasn't a regular dream. Atlas laid his scroll down and recited his dream to them. When he finished, he sighed. "You're not going to give into Blackice, are you?" Cosmo asked warily. Atlas shook his head. He wasn't giving in.

But next thing he knew, he was secretly meeting with Blackice every once in a while, he had told him that he would help him, use his animus magic to do Blackice's bidding. Atlas could vividly remember Blackice's evil smirk when he had decided to help him.

Atlas shuddered and pushed back the memory. He was not going to betray his friends again, no matter what. Atlas was staying with them, as far as he could go, as long as it would take.

As long as it will take for Cosmo to think about me back. A voice inside Atlas's mind whispered. Atlas smiled at this. As long as it would take. He sat on the edge of the clouds, waiting for Sunset to return.

The days moved on, no sign. Atlas was starting to feel worried. Sunset was only going to visit her parents; it had been three days since she had left. Atlas stared through the clouds. Was she on her way back? Or had she decided not to come back at all? Atlas looked around. No one was there. Atlas knew the others wouldn't worry about him, so he dove down into the freezing misty air, soaring

down through the endless layers of white fog. He opened his eyes and reached the open air, scanning the skies for Sunset. He beat his wings slowly, searching around. He knew her parents lived in the rainforest, which was on his left, he swivels around and made his way towards the scattered trees. Atlas was relieved to be back. Pyrrhia was his home. The ground was below him again, solid ground though, not the soft clouds that he had trampled on for days. Atlas breathed in a large amount of air and swooped down to feel the grass press against his scales. The warmth of the sun filled him, as it bright yellow rays shone onto his scales, making his colours pop. Atlas found himself smiling for the first time in days. Atlas was free. He felt as though all his worries had left him. Well, until... *CRASH*

"Atlas? Atlas! Are you waking up? Oh, oh please do..." A familiar voice said. Atlas lifted his eye lids slightly, to see the black and yellow scales he had been waiting for. "Sunset?" He asked, his voice straining. "Oh Atlas! Yes, it's me! Why were you down here in the first place?" She asked. Atlas sat up, his wings aching. He had obviously taken a fall. "Looking for you, what happened?" He asked, staring into Sunset's dark green eyes. "Well, we sort of crashed into each-other... You fell before we could catch you and you've been unconscious for a few hours... It's fine though! No injuries, I checked..." Sunset reassured him. Atlas felt weird. This was his first time alone with Sunset since they had left the Summer Palace. He felt a little guilty, she didn't know he had feelings for Cosmo...

Wait... Not alone...

A Seawing hybrid that looked a lot like Cosmo was standing next to them. Atlas looked at him with a studying expression, and the Seawing blinked and turned away.

"Oh, right. Uh... This is Droplet, Cosmo's brother." Sunset said, looking at Droplet. Atlas saw a faint expression on Sunset's face, Atlas recognised it as the way he used to look at her.

Does Sunset love Droplet?

Atlas felt his spirits dampen, but he loved Cosmo, Sunset was only his friend now, no matter how strong his feelings were towards

them both.

I can't be with Sunset anymore. She likes someone else now.

Atlas sighed, and lifted himself onto his talons.

"Do you need help flying back to Eden?" Sunset asked. "Eden?" Atlas replied. Was Eden Cloudland? "Um, right. Eden is the Cloudwing's home... Funny, isn't it? I always imagined Eden being a name for a lush forest..." Sunset laughed. "Yeah..." Atlas said, not paying attention. He lifted up into the air, his wings giving way slightly, but he didn't let Sunset see that.

Atlas felt his good mood fade. His mind was a mix of thoughts. He was going back to Eden again; he had barely spent any time in the sun. Also, Atlas couldn't remove the sinking feeling he had about losing Sunset, they had loved each-other so much at the academy. Atlas wished he was back home, reading a scroll with his mother. But he couldn't.

I said I wasn't going to betray them again. I wasn't lying.

Atlas just felt that everything was going round in circles. The same things were happening. Someone would get hurt, they would fly onwards to somewhere he didn't want to go, but in the end, they had a prophecy to fulfill. Atlas couldn't put his boredom and feelings before saving everyone. He would soon be a part of history, whether he liked it or not.

chapter two

[image]

'*I'm okay*'

Atlas stared into the luminous sky, his thoughts controlling his mind.

'*I'm a failure*' '*How could I lose her*?' '*What can I do to stop the prophecy*?'

Nothing.

I have no special powers, well, I guess I'm an animus, but I wouldn't know what to do... Bumblebee is the one who's going to end the prophecy, I'm sure of it. At least Bumblebee and *Sunset, they're the smartest.*

Atlas's talons trembled as pure tears dropped from his eyes, unrecognizable in the heavy rain. He felt miserable. Flashbacks of his dreams with Blackice kept popping into his focus, his horrible past weighing him down.

My dragonet hood wasn't that *bad...*

"Are you scared Atlas? Aw no..." Hawker chanted in his ear. "Poor little Atlas is scared..." He announced to the group of five behind them. Atlas shuddered in fear and in anger. He would love right now to just throw something right in Hawker's snout, spray some Rainwing venom on him, Atlas didn't care. His wings ached from his Metamorphosis, only breaking out of his cocoon early this morning. He hadn't flown before, not ever.

What if I can't do it? Will I die if I fall? Probably... Atlas thought. He gazed down from the cliff, his horror-struck eyes searching for the bottom.

"Want me to help?" Hawker goggled and before Atlas cold reply, the Hivewing had pushed him off the cliff, and Atlas was falling before he realised what happened. Atlas closed his eyes and tried with all his might to fly, but his wings just would listen.

I'm going to die, I'm going to die, I'm going to die! His mind screamed at him. He was begging for help, flailing his talons around trying to do *something*, but it was no use.

"Hey!" A voice screamed from the top of the cliff. Atlas was too frightened to open his eyes, he felt like he would crash into the ground any second now, so he began to wonder.

Does it hurt to die?

"Did you *seriously* push him off the cliff? He hasn't even flown yet!" She said, Atlas could tell she was waving her arms in frustration, but it was only a guess. Suddenly he heard a large '*whoosh'* which either meant they had all left him to suffer death, or someone was coming. And then he felt the smoothest talons grip around him gently and he had stopped falling. It felt odd being held like this. Atlas opened his eyes and stared at his rescuer. She was a beautiful Hivewing, her deep hazel eyes gazing at him, and she smiled gleefully at him.

At me a tiny voice whispered at the back of his mind.

Atlas forced himself to smile, but it came out all crooked and the Hivewing giggled. Atlas was shaking so much, he had just fallen off a massive cliff and survived, the grass still barely visible below them.

"Th-thanks" Atlas managed to stutter, trying to fix his awkward smile. "I'm Bumblebee," she said, fluttering downwards to land. "Atlas" I replied hoarsely.

Then the vision faded away, and he was back in Eden, sopping wet, standing alone. Atlas toppled over onto the soft cloud-like floor, his snout in his talons. The sudden vision had scared him, it felt like it was happening again. Atlas could tell he was drooling, but he wasn't paying attention.

'*Who do I trust? I feel betrayed by everyone, well, I guess I was the one who betrayed them.*'

Tears fell from his eyes.

Search for it. A voice hissed in his ear. Atlas felt stupid for talking to his own brain, but he replied, '*search for what?*' There was a pause. '*The answer*' It hissed back. Atlas sighed. Well, that wasn't helpful. But he got up and began to pace.

Okay. Atlas pondered, starting to create a plan in his mind. *First, I'm going to see Bumblebee, maybe get some help. Then I'll go search the castle and the rest of Eden. And then, well, I'll go to the Sea Kingdom. Why? To find out why I'm an animus. Then we'll save Pyrrhia.*

That plan seemed reasonable. But if only Atlas knew how impossible it would turn out to be.

Atlas knocked on the door, hoping for an answer. None. Atlas turned away before hearing a voice call 'come in'. Atlas's stomach churned as he pushed open the white door, revealing Bumblebee sitting in a hammock reading.

"Oh. It's you..." Bumblebee said emotionlessly and beckoned him to come over. "Sorry..." Atlas muttered bitterly as he sat down on the opposite hammock.

"Look." Atlas started. "I know you don't want me here, but-..." Bumblebee interrupted. "Who said I didn't want you here?" She asked, staring into his cold blue eyes.

"Well, uh... Anyway. I need some help." He sighed, making her eyes light up. "Ooh, what do you need?" She replied. Atlas stopped himself from saying anymore without thinking. He looked out the window at the endless galaxy above, watching the Cloudwings soar around without a care in the world.

"I need you to help me search Eden. I need to do *something;* I need to find out who to trust." He blurted out without thinking, then immediately regretted it. Bumblebee looked at him with a quizzical look in her eyes, and she looked slightly heartbroken too.

"Why can't you trust us?" She asked solemnly.

What do I say?

"I do trust you; I just also need to find out who *not* to trust... that's all," Atlas said quickly, partially joining his words together nervously. "Oh" was all she said. There was an uncomfortable pause. Both Atlas and Bumblebee were looking towards the ground, thinking. "Yeah..." She said after a while. "I'll help..." Atlas let out a breath and smiled. He was anxious that she would reject him.

"Thank you... so much. If you're free, we could start now?" He suggested hopefully, already walking towards the door. "Shouldn't we wait for the others though?" She inquired, obviously not getting the point. Atlas caught his breath. He didn't want to be asked this.

"No. Us... Just us... Morning..." he choked out, hoping she understood him. Luckily, she smiled and nodded.

Atlas stepped quickly out the door, not thinking he had experienced something more embarrassing. Atlas stood an inch from the back of her door, and sighed, clawing his own scales, drawing his own blood. The blood dripped from his talons, drop after drop, a large red mark forming underneath.

'*I'm okay...*' the thought he had had only hours before formed in his mind strongly.

'*I lied.*'

Wow, sorry that took so long. I'm sort of just putting this off, as I've started planning a new book. But I promise (hopefully) that I'll finish this, there just won't be a book after this, it will finish with this one. And sorry this chapter is so short, I had no ideas yet again. But I hope you enjoyed it, cya!

chapter three

[image]

He had been waiting all morning.

Nothing.

Come on, by all the silk, where are you Bumblebee?

Atlas was pacing his room, quietly so that he didn't disturb a sleeping Foxglove. His snoring distracted Atlas from the plan he was forming in his mind, making him, countless times, want to throw something at his friend's drooling face, but angrily, he shook the thought out of his mind.

Atlas charged out the door in frustration and sat down opposite Sunset and Cosmo for breakfast.

Atlas's wrists had been tingling all morning, more than usual. It was like tiny needles were stabbing him from underneath his scales. Unluckily, this time enough pain surged through his body that he yelped in pain, startling Sunset from her boar.

"Atlas, are you alright?" she asked me in a tired voice, bags under her eyes. Atlas felt guilt consume him like a raging wildfire burning a gaping hole through the veil that had once been innocent. Atlas knew why Sunset was so tired. Atlas had had a restless sleep the night before, tossing and turning, fiddling his talons while possible outcomes for their quest flashed through his mind, each like a seed of despair, being planted into his head. Sunset had been listening at his door in worry, nearly all night she was taking shifts of making sure he was okay. Once she had to barge into the room in fright as Atlas had gasped loudly in pain from the pricks under his scales, Atlas had to spend a long period of time convincing her to go to sleep, but he could tell she ignored him.

"I'm fine" I lied, pursing my lip as I flicked through the page of a history book. *'The tales of the abyss'* He read, scanning the fancy gold

text covering the front of the book. As he lightly read some of the paragraphs, his heart skipped a beat.

"Wait..." Atlas abruptly blurted, not holding in the questions any longer. "It says here that the breath of evil was fully defeated a couple of years ago... *by Luna*" I gaped, staring opened eyed at the name. *Blue's sister was the one who defeated the breath of evil? How did I not know this?* I thought, but Cosmo's voice washed out the mysteries of his mind.

"So how is it back?" her quavering voice managed to whisper. She looked towards Sunset and she shrugged. "Who knows, I guess we'll have to find out one way or another..." She replied through a mouthful of food, Cosmo laughed and Atlas, reluctantly, laughed too, how could you not?

"Hold on..." Cosmo said again, pondering and rereading the words on the books countless of times. "Didn't the prophecy say all the tribes would drown?" Cosmo exclaimed; her quavering voice more balanced now. "Yeah, what about it?" Atlas asked casually as if Cosmo had said "Cow's moo, right?" Atlas's worry-free tone had made Cosmo death stare him, making him look away harmlessly.

"What about the Seawings?" She continued. Sunset had now become lost in her thoughts too, but Atlas still didn't get it.

"Oh, you dopey banana slug!" Cosmo snapped, but in a sort of loving tone he had never heard her use before, or maybe he had imagined it. Atlas ignored the insult and continued to stare at her blankly.

"Seawings breath underwater!" Sunset and Cosmo declared at the same time. "Oooh" Atlas realised what they were saying now.

"So, if Seawings can breathe underwater, how can they drown?" Atlas contemplated as if he had fully gotten the question the first time. Cosmo rolled her eyes. "Exactly," she said, dropping her mango in a dramatic way.

"Well, any ideas of what they'll do?" Bumblebee questioned from behind him. He looked into her honey-kissed eyes, and she smiled

gleefully at him and felt his face instantly become burning hot.

'Breath. Everything's okay, I'm smiling' Atlas thought calmy in his mind, taking deep, controlled breaths. This was a trick he had learned from Luna, they had been friends when he visited Pantala a year ago, and he had met Dusky and, while Dusky was a few years older than him, they still had fun.

Atlas must have been lost in his mind for a while because when he re-opened his eyes, Sunset and Cosmo had left the room and Bumblebee was sitting next to him which startled Atlas, making him jump slightly off his chair.

"Oh, you silly silk brain" She joked with a laugh that strongly reminded him of Dusky. I gaped at her unconsciously, imaginary fog crowding my mind as tears started to form in my eyes from exhaustion. "Wake up sleepyhead" She whacked him in the head with her wing, and he was surprised how strongly she did it too if she was just joking around. "I'm up, great, fine" I heard my voice declare without much notice and waited sleepily for her to say something.

"Well?" She questioned him, making her usual '*can't you already guess what I'm about to say?'* expression. She sighed at his lack of an answer. "Oh, come *on* Atlas, are you ready?" She asked, flailing her yellow and blacked striped talons in the air.

"Oh, right. Yeah, let's go" I answered emotionlessly and stood up and followed the Hivewing into the fresh air. I took in a lungful of breath, and my worries floated out of my mind. "Where are we headed?" I asked her as I lifted off the ground, my fatigued wings beating indignantly.

"Circle Eden and look around for suspiciously ominous dragons? Then afterward we'll search inside. Deal?" She asked, looking into my bloodshot eyes. "Deal" I repeated.

We beat our wings, and I couldn't help but notice Bumblebee was fidgeting nervously.

"What's up?" I asked her, genuinely concerned.

"I don't know..." She replied anxiously. "I just have this overpowering feeling that something bad is going to happen..."

Again, I am so sorry for the short chapter. I'm as tired as Atlas lol, I've had a headache nearly all day. But I promise my next chapters will be lengthier :)

chapter four

[image]

Ominous clouds cast shadows overhead as Atlas sat on the edge of a cliff, overlooking the town of Eden.

"What do you think will happen?" Bumblebee asked tentatively.

"I don't know"

Atlas laid back and stared at the chirping birds, singing an anthem to the song in their head. So carefree, without a worry in the world.

"Atlas!" A worried voice called behind him. Startled, Atlas turned around to see who was calling him. Sunset appeared out of the shadows and tumbled next to him, grasping his talons a little too tightly.

"What?" Atlas asked. He could tell something was wrong, she looked worried.

"A prophecy..." she replied, her voice shaking as she stared at him desperately.

"What about it?"

"A new one..."

A shadow was covering her face in a creepy way, making Atlas shiver. He had only seen Sunset this scared once, when she found out the breath of evil was still living. Atlas was horrified that time when she collapsed, her face paleing, tears dripping from her eyes.

"A new one?" He replied. Sunset nodded as Foxglove came out of nowhere and sat down to listen.

"What's happened?" Foxglove asked cheerfully. Atlas didn't want to be the one to break his spirits, but was slightly relieved when he didn't have to. As soon as he noticed the look on Sunset's face, his smile faded and his eyes became filled with fear. Foxglove was Atlas's best friend, and it broke him to see his friend like this. Along with Bumblebee, he and Foxglove had known eachother since dragonet-hood. They clicked immediately. Foxglove had the kindness and sense that Atlas didn't, and Atlas had the courage and determination that Foxglove lacked. The other dragonets had called them the inseparable duo, everyone knew they were best friends. But they had had a fight before coming to the academy, ruining their friendship. He looked into the Leafwing's deep green eyes. They had made it up to each other during the flight to Sanctuary, and looking back now, Atlas could remember just how awkward it was, but in the end they had both ended up in a fit of laughing.

"Sunset's had a new prophecy..." Atlas answered, not noticing the quiver in his solemn voice. He looked at Bumblebee who was evidently pondering something.

"What?" I asked her, which came out slightly more aggressive then what i had intended, but she didn't seem to notice.

"It's just.. I've never heard that happen before..." She replied cautiously. It took Atlas a moment to realize that she hadn't really given him a straight answer...

"Heard what happen?"

"Overlapping prophecies."

"Oh... yeah" Atlas replied. If he was being honest, he had never heard of that either. Not that he had read many history books, but he was 100%, well, maybe 95% sure that a double prophecy had never occurred.

"Can you tell us the prophecy?" Foxglove asked, breaking the silence. Sunset nodded gravely, closing her eyes. She began to speak in the voice that Atlas had hated, it was coming out of her mouth, yet, creepily, it didn't sound like Sunset at all.

A group of six shall make their way

To find the plant you seek

The vines that grow beyond control

In a place no other can reach

The famous one who speaks with plants

Will finally make it end

But one shall die from danger's hand

And one abandoned by a friend

This danger will somehow harm you

But you have to carry on

With much help from heroes of old

You have all most certainly won

Atlas stared at Sunset for a long period of time, dwelling over the words she had recited. Atlas only had an idea what few of the lines meant, but many... he had no clue.

"'*One shall die from danger's hand*' doesn't sound good..." Foxglove gulped, twirling his talons nervously as he continued to think.

"Well," Bumblebee started, "We know for sure that *the one who speaks with plants* is my Aunt Sundew..."

"Aunt?" Atlas questioned. He knew he wasn't wrong on this, Cricket and Sundew were in no way related.

"Shutup" Sunset said bluntly, eyeing him down. Atlas knew she was trying to send a message with her eyes, but he didn't know what.

Atlas sighed. The last thing he wanted to do was wait more. He couldn't afford to lose anyone else... He didn't think he *could* cope with more death...

Bumblebee seemed to guess what he was thinking and smiled sadly. "Atlas, I don't think we should do anything just yet... I mean, you heard what she said... 'One shall die from dangers hand'... maybe if we wait a while... could we prevent that?" Bumblebee questioned herself hopefully, but Atlas could still hear worry in her voice.

"You can't prevent a prophecy from happening..." Foxglove said out of nowhere. Atlas hoped he was guessing, maybe there was a chance noone he knew would suffer, but from the certainty in Foxglove's voice, he somehow knew that there was no way to stop it from happening.

"We need to figure out who's coming with us... Sundew, obviously." Cosmo said as she walked towards us, a serious look on her face. Her expression looked fierce, which Atlas nearly laughed at, he had never imagined Cosmo looking scary.

"We also need Sunset, her foreseeing will be helpful. Sunset, I know you don't enjoy using it often, but you'll have to start using your gift more frequently." Cosmo continued, as she sat down next to Foxglove. Cosmo began eyeing Atlas down, which made him feel highly uncomfortable having his crush looking at him like that.

"Bumblebee will come. So will I..." Cosmo stopped, as if she had to think who the last person would be.

It's between me and Dusk... Atlas began to think. *Of course it will be me, I don't think I have to worry.*

But just as Atlas had had that thought, Cosmo sighed.

"Atlas can't come, it will have to be Dusk." She said. But she winced, she wanted him to come, but she knew something, something that prevented Atlas from coming.

"Hang on... Why-" Atlas began to protest but Cosmo forcefully put her talon up and stopped him from talking.

"You are not coming." Cosmo said, and from her tone, Atlas knew she had made her final decision.

"Jeez, since when have you been so bossy..." Atlas said under his

breath, but caught Cosmo staring at him with loathing in her eye which meant she had heard.

Atlas felt speechless. He had always wanted to prove himself by doing heroic things and saving the day! But the one time his friends were doing something fun, the only chance he had of showing other dragons he was worthy... he wouldn't be going.

Hope you like it, I won't be posting as much (as you can already tell) as I used to, I sorta just do it in spontaneous bursts of energy... but NEW PROPHECY!!! yay!! Randomly, comment who your favourite is so far in my series (one of the characters I have created). Mine is Sunset... she can be fierce and I love it <3

updated prophecy

A group of six shall make their way

To find the plant you seek

The vines that grow beyond control

In a place no other can reach

The famous one who speaks with plants

Will finally make it end

But one shall die from danger's hand

And one abandoned by a friend

This danger will somehow harm you

But you have to carry on

With much help from heroes of old

You have all most certainly won

---

chapter five

[image]

Atlas walked into his cavern, shocked at the surprising events before. He flopped hopelessly on his bed and stared at the open sky through the square shaped window. He clenched his snout, desperate to get out, desperate to do something. But there was nothing he could do.

He instantly jolted up, he could hear yelling in the room beside. He couldn't be still so he crept outside and stopped at Sunset's and Cosmo's room. He wasn't usually an eavesdropper, but he didn't feel like he had a choice this time.

"Why can't Atlas come? I don't get it?" A voice asked, which Atlas guessed was Sunset.

"You heard the prophecy!" Cosmo's outraged voice yelled. "One shall be abandoned by a friend, I couldn't handle it if it was Atlas." Cosmo said the last line affectionately, Atlas couldn't help but smile.

"Cosmo, I know, but I'm sure he wouldn't just drop out again, I've talked to him, he was pretty sincere." Sunset replied. Atlas mentally sighed.

Of course they're arguing about me... Just my luck to be eavesdropping now...

"Yeah, but what if he does?" Cosmo protested.

"He won't"

"He might!!"

"I've talked to him..."

"That's not enough!"

"It has to be!" Sunset was yelling now. Atlas felt slightly ashamed that they both were getting worked up over him...

"He's not going!!" Cosmo yelled, answered by a small 'shh' from Sunset. "You know I can't lose him again..." Cosmo was crying now. Atlas stepped away from the door, wincing.

Why? Atlas asked himself. *Why me?* Atlas felt a voice quiver in his brain, startling him out of his scales.

Who needs them? It said in a raspy voice.

Me... Atlas answered in a tiny voice. The voice sounded evil, but Atlas had no-one else to talk to, everyone shied away when he walked past, ignoring him.

Go find your own answers! The voice continued as if Atlas hadn't said a word, *I can give you your own prophecy if you want?*

'The worthless child has to learn

to find his own answers

And forget his friends

Forget...'

'How did that sound?' The voice asked, a hint of a chuckle in his voice. Well, Atlas guessed it was a he, the voice was deep and forceful, as if he was trying to push something with his words.

Uhm... Atlas replied. He didn't know what to say, either this was some sort of hallucination in his mind? Or an actual powerful dragon was somehow talking to him, and if Atlas insulted him, he would blast Atlas to shreds.

It didn't really give me an answer... Atlas finally replied after building up most of his courage, or most of his stupidness.

Look, I wasn't supposed to do this, but I'll give you a vision, just this once...

Atlas paused. He was always terrified of visions. They creeped him out. It was like, *doo-dee-doo-dee-doo, oh i'm having a vision! Catch me! Bla bla bla bla*, which was probably dramatic, but pretty close. But, how could he have a vision? How powerful was this mystical dragon?

Maybe this is the dragon you've been waiting for. Maybe this is the dragon you can trust... A side of his brain whispered, trying to persuade him. Atlas didn't think so... But maybe his brain had a point. His friends were technically abandoning him to go fulfil his dreams without him, and he would be stuck here alone, talking to an invisible dragon in his mind.

Go on... Atlas replied to his mind tentatively.

He's helping you... Atlas pondered. That was true. *Ask him for the vision...* His mind went on, but that was the last thing it said.

Atlas was left feeling stuck, standing awkwardly as he was engulfed in his own mind. What other choice did he have? He had to do something.

"Give me... Give me the vision" Atlas said aloud, hoping no-one but his secret friend heard him. It took a few moments for the voice to reply, Atlas had begun to think it was gone, but then it sighed and said, *very well.*

And instantly Atlas collapsed.

'The SeaWing was pacing. Her talons were tingling more than normal, she was beginning to feel worried.

"Are you there Puffin?" Her assistant asked outside.

Puffin stopped in her tracks. She stayed quiet, as still as Orca's statues.

Please don't come in... Puffin silently prayed, and she was in luck as her assistant shrugged outside and wandered away. Puffin quietly sighed. She was going insane. She knew it. It wasn't the fact that the animus in her blood was more evident under her scales, it wasn't that she made herself constantly alone, it was the fact that she had moments where she felt hungry, hungry for dragons. She winced. This wasn't her. She wasn't

a maniac. She had been told multiple times that she was one of the sweetest dragons in the palace. She knew that wasn't true but it was somewhat comforting. Puffin's gills pulsed in pain as she breathed raspy, heavy breaths. She would have to tell someone. She couldn't do any more animus magic. But she had to wait. She had to wait for the dragonet that Cove enchanted. She was the messenger of truth, the only way the hybrid dragonet would find out his purpose. He will soon find out the vision the NightWing gave the SeaWing queen a millennium ago, a secret that had been passed down through generations of queens, waiting for the time the lost continent dragon was born. He should be coming soon. I'll try not to kill anyone with my magic until then...'

Atlas was wrenched awake, gasping for breath. He felt like he had just come back from the dead. Dragons were crowding, medics crouched over him, staring into his eyes. Atlas winced as the light around blinded his eyes, but through the large stars circling around his head, he could make out the shape of Cosmo, Sunset and Foxglove all relieved that he was alive.

"Atlas!" Cosmo said exuberantly as she leapt into his talons and squeezed him so hard he felt like his ribs cracked. "...hey" Atlas managed to say, struggling to force out words as much as he was struggling to breathe.

"How-What?" Atlas stuttered, looking into Cosmo's puffy eyes, bright red from crying.

"We thought you were dead!" Cosmo choked, wiping her eyes and coming in for another hug. "Yeah, I see that..." Atlas replied softly as he pushed Cosmo away. "Seriously though, what happened?" Atlas couldn't remember anything since he had passed out, maybe this was how Sunset often felt. Or maybe her vision were safer. Atlas was dazed, his vision was blurry, but what shocked him the most were his talons. He could feel it now and he didn't think it was a feeling from his vision. His talons were tingling more now too, Atlas hoped he wasn't going insane too.

"We heard a bang from outside and rushed out to see what had happened, you were just.. lying there..." Sunset said. "You weren't breathing, but.. You were talking... It was weird..." Sunset stopped, she was hiding something. "What do you know? Tell me!" Atlas

pleaded, Sunset could easily look into the future and see the answer to this problem.

"Well, I saw a vision a couple days ago about you collapsing, I didn't think it would happen, but you felt fine, but the weird thing is, someone was talking to me during that vision, the only vision I had heard someone mentally speaking to me..." Sunset breathed, looking around anxiously, she wouldn't meet eye contact.

"What did they say?"

"Well, I can't remember exactly, something like, '*come to me, trust me, i will draw in your friend, come to me'* it was extremely creepy." Sunset's voice was shaky, but suddenly Atlas knew who was talking to her.

The same dragon that gave me the vision. Maybe he is evil...

Atlas sat up abruptly, but Foxglove pushed him back down.

"You are too weak to stand... You've been unconscious for a day, we haven't left your side, but you would faint straight away if you tried to do anything." The LeafWing said.

No, That can't be right, Atlas gaped. *A day? It was only five minutes in my vision...*

Atlas' snout was open wide as he stared down at his body. He had lost five kilos that he couldn't afford to lose.

"Oh my..." Was all Atlas could manage to say. How in the moons could he have just *suddenly* lost weight that would *likely* have been useful in... almost everything.

Cosmo and Sunset were now quietly whispering to each other, blocked away from the group. Atlas knew what they were saying. It was time for them to go. A day ago Atlas had no clue what he would do while he was away. But he knew now, thanks to 'creepy dude's' vision.

He would go to the SeaWing palace, find Puffin, and find out why Cove enchanted him to be an animus. He would soon know the

truth. And he would be going to his first palace. If he could survive long enough to get there.

Sorry for the delay on this chapter, but you'll sadly be getting less frequent updates on this book, but you'll have Traitor in Blood to read during your wait. (a collab wof fan fiction between me and @MiLLy_22000088 that you should 100% go read) hope you liked it!!

chapter six

[image]

"You're insane..."

"I know, isn't it great!"

"No, seriously... You really think you can get into the SeaWing palace? It's hidden, you idiot!" Sunset replied half jokingly, half legit.

Atlas thought about this. *True* he thought... But he could find help.

"Or you could be killed..." Sunset continued as if she was reading aloud a book called, 'T*op ten reasons why you should NOT try to break an entry into the SeaWing Palace*' which Atlas thought was highly encouraging.

"You don't sound too sad about that," Atlas said sarcastically.

Sunset glowered at him with tired eyes.

"You know none of us want you killed." Sunset said with a yawn. Atlas felt like yawning himself but, luckily, prevented it.

"Look..." Sunset continued, cautiously twirling her tail far away from anyone in danger of her tail barb. "We're leaving, so don't do anything stupid, okay?" The colour drained slightly from her face but Atlas pretended not to notice.

Atlas shied away from reality, trying to distract himself from the fact that he would be venturing alone soon, his friends would be gone.

"Okay?" Sunset asked again, raising an eyebrow. "Mhm," Atlas replied with a nod and got a strange look from Sunset in return.

Sunset then unexpectedly leaned in and wrapped her wings around his in an *'i'm nervous for you'* sort of way. Immediately Atlas felt the

steaming hot blood rush up to his face as his heart beat sped up a little. Atlas' mind rushed back to the days at the academy, where Sunset and Atlas had been so close. They had loved each other. But that was then... It felt so long ago, everyone had changed, so much had happened. This is now. Back then, their love was so carefree, so fun. But now, love was heartbreaking.

"Good luck" Atlas said as Sunset began to walk away, glancing back with a worried look in her eyes, her brow furrowed.

"You too."

Then she just walked away, and it felt like a piece of his life just removed from him, the exact same feeling he had felt when Cosmo had left him earlier this morning. He watched as Sunset said a heartfelt goodbye to Droplet as they stared into eachothers eyes, and tore away again, tears filling their eyes. The two flew off in opposite directions, Sunset towards potential danger, Droplet back to the academy, where he would be looked after and have company. Atlas felt a burning sense of jealousy erupt in him. Droplet had it easy, being looked after the academy, spending time with the people he loved... Atlas would have to find out his own truth all by himself, not a single soul to accompany him. But Atlas felt guilty. He couldn't hold a grudge against Droplet, the poor SeaWing wanted to accompany Sunset as much as Atlas did, and both had been turned away in fear of losing them.

As Droplet flew from sight, Atlas continued to think about him.

I wanted Sunset to love me... Atlas thought as his beating heart felt crushed.

But she always loved you...

Atlas stared out the window, his puffy eyes blood-red from sobbing. Disaster was coming, on its way to sabotage the prophecy, and potentially destroy any luck Atlas had of finding his truth. Atlas stared down at his empty talons, he had nothing to bring with him to the palace. *What good would it do to sit here and sulk?* Atlas pondered. He trudged through the mist covering the floor, the sensation of the softness was calming, but an inkling feeling told

him this would be the last time he could appreciate it.

He swooped off the ledge of Eden and through the fog emptiness below. *The SeaWing palace is South - East*, A thought in his brain told him as the sun, and unluckily, the rain hit his stiff scales.

Thanks brain.

He pushed through determinedly through the gushing wind and the pouring rain. It was a challenge to keep his flying steady, he felt like any moment he would tumble from the sky and collapse. Atlas hesitantly looked down, and that was his mistake. The ground was at least fifty feet below him, if he fell, he would die without a doubt. Atlas gulped and began to feel woozy, but he tried to shake it off, but the thought still lingered in his mind. He closed his eyes and pressed on through the rain, determinedly blocking out all thoughts that had something to do with crashing.

But the strangest thing happened.

A downwards wind knocked into him with such force it began pushing him down towards the earth, no matter how hard he fought it. The 5 kilos that he had lost would have given him more strength, which would have been highly useful right now. It felt like being forced down by an invisible giant. This powerful downward wind was unheard of. Unnatural. Atlas felt his brain clogging with panic, his eyelids closing momentarily from exhaustion. Then he felt himself fully fall, his brain fully closed to what was happening, panic fading away into nothingness.

In that moment he was caught, smooth talons wrapped around him like a barrier between himself and the ground. Atlas attempted to wake up, to even open his eyes in the slightest way. He peered through the small gap of vision and saw pale blue scales, like diamonds.

SeaWing, Atlas's brain chirped. *So pretty.*

"It's okay..." The sweetest voice said. "You are safe for now, but you need to rest..."

Atlas nodded and tried to say 'Okay' but it came out more like, 'Ooh yay'.

The SeaWing giggled and closed his eyes. And he was out.

Atlas had another vision which meant 'creepy dude' was still reaching him and able to show him stuff.

And this one made him panic.

"Sunset!" Cosmo cried, searching blindly through the blindfold over eyes. Sunset didn't answer. She was limp and being carried in the arms of another dragon. They looked like SeaWings. Foxglove was fighting with a SeaWing of dark blue, effortly trying to resist the blind fold. But that only ending in deep gashes with blood flowing from the SeaWings sharp claws. Bumblebee was unconscious too, being pushed through the air by one of the capturers. Sundew was there, and she was angry, she would not give up. She had already sent down a SeaWing who was on the ground five feet below, large wounds on his talons and snout. But even Sundew wasn't strong enough for these dragons who had already put the blind fold on her and were dragging her away, kicking and screaming. Atlas tried to call out, but his voice wouldn't work, he couldn't move which just made him feel pathetic.

"We'll take them back to the cave. They shouldn't escape there..." The dragon holding Sunset said in a gruff voice.

And then the dragon looked straight at Atlas through the dream, and then Atlas woke up terrified.

chapter seven

[image]

They're in danger

Atlas was in shock. Had the vision already happened? Or was it showing him the future?

An optimistic thought popped into his mind.

Do I still have time to save them?

But the scary part was, if even Sundew couldn't fight off these rogue SeaWings, what chance did *he* have?

Atlas heaved himself off the bed and collapsed under his weak legs. Atlas grunted from a sharp spike of pain that shot up his leg as he tried to push himself off the floor, grasping the bed for help.

"Are you sure you don't need help?" a soft, recognisable voice said behind him. Atlas swirled his neck around and caught a glimpse of black scales with splotches of white and grey before he kinked his neck and rubbed it in despair.

White, grey and black... Atlas thought. *Must be a CloudWing / NightWing hybrid. I thought she was a SeaWing? I swear she had blue scales when I saw her first... Maybe my nearly unconscious brain was playing tricks on me.*

There were a lot more hybrids than there were around five years ago There were still way more pure-tribe dragons though. Atlas laughed at his luck. He seemed to be bumping into a lot of hybrids.

"Nah, I'm fine.. I think..." Atlas replied, but she assisted him anyway. Under other circumstances he would protest, but, he would never admit it, but he really did need that extra help.

The NightWing peered at him. "You look..." she said, but Atlas finished her sentence. "Horrible."

She chuckled and sat down on the stool next to his bed, which he had a feeling was where she had sat a lot of the time he had been unconscious.

"I'm Cyclone."

"Atlas." He replied as he examined the room.

A small shelf sat against the back wall, pots of growing flowers placed on top. The shelf looked extremely old, Atlas noticed as he looked closer. At least a hundred years old, crafted from pine tree wood from the ancient NightWing Kingdom. Atlas only knew this because of the old fashioned label on the side. Plants and vines hung across the room, giving the area a jungle feeling which Atlas highly enjoyed. The room reminded him of his parents and their tribes. Both the RainWings and the SilkWings love plants, both the small ones with tiny leaves reaching out at the sun for growth, and the massive plants with roof sized leaves that blocked your path whenever you were flying through the jungle.

"You have this strange aura... one I've only felt once before..." Cyclone shivered and looked away, staring through the window that was looking out to the ocean. Atlas turned his head to look out the other window on the other side of the room. Ocean.

"Um... Where are we?" Atlas asked as Cyclone turned again to meet his gaze.

"Tyloa." She replied as if that answered all his questions. "Where?" Atlas replied with a confused grin.

"Tyloa. An island between Pyrrhia and Pantala. I named it because... I live here alone so I thought... maybe it would be nice to give it some identity." Cyclone said dimly which made Atlas feel bad for her.

"You live here all by yourself? How long have you been here?" Cyclone paused at this question, looking again out to the ocean.

"A long, long time." She replied sadly, but looked towards him with a forced smile, but Atlas had seen the single teardrop roll down her

snout.

Atlas paused as though the gears in his brain had stopped spinning. Cyclone's answer had only confused him more. Cyclone looked around his age, yet acted like she was years older.

"How old... uh...are you?" Atlas stuttered after coming back to his senses. Cyclone didn't answer but Atlas knew she had heard the question.

Cyclone wasn't saying something, and Atlas didn't know what. But seconds later he did.

"Do you want the truth?" Cyclone asked and Atlas nodded and obvious yes.

"I've roamed Pyrrhia for around 100 years... enchanted by an animus to be immortal whether I like it or not. I am only allowed to leave my island when help is needed, bring them back to my island and send them on their way again. I mean, I can't complain... I have everything I need here and am almost always busy... But it can get lonely." Cyclone wiped away another tear and didn't dare to meet Atlas's horror stricken expression.

"Who did it?"

"Hmm?" Cyclone said who was currently lost in her own depressing thoughts.

"Who enchanted you?"

"Jerboa..." Which was a name that Atlas did not expect.

"*Jerboa?* Which one? The ancient one or the other one?"

"The other one" She answered with a small laugh.

"But why?"

"Rage I guess... She was one of the few Pyrrhian dragons who had gained knowledge about the CloudWings... I'm assuming you know about them? I caught you when you were coming from the barrier.

Well, she had a best friend. And when I say best friend, I mean best friend. To tell you the truth... it was actually my mother... My mother was a NightWing, she fell in love with a CloudWing... His name was Rainshower... They had two dragonets together. Me and my older brother... Backstabber..." Cyclone winced as she said his name.

"We lived in Eden together our whole dragonethood... Until something happened to Backstabber... Noone knows what... But he killed our mother..." Cyclone choked on the words, more tears falling from her eyes. 'Jerboa was terrified at the news... She used her animus magic on me. She enchanted Backstabber as well. Enchanted him to suffering, he would be controlled by the Breath of Evil as long as he lived, which would be much longer than a normal dragonet life, and he would continue being controlled, even if the plant is defeated. Don't ask me how she knew about the Breath of Evil... but her decisions were poor." Cyclone finished her story and even Atlas's eyes were filled with tears now.

"Wow... that's horrible..."

Cyclone nodded, but Atlas's mind clicked and he remembered his friends.

"Wait! Cyclone, I'm so sorry! My friends are in danger, I have to go!" Atlas cried, scurrying off his bed. Atlas thought that was probably one of the most socially awkward things he had said.

"Oh." Cyclone became even more miserable. "Okay... If you must..."

"Will I ever see you again?" Atlas asked, but he had a feeling he already knew the answer.

"No. Noone ever sees me more than once. But you must save your friends. Good luck" Cyclone wiped the last tear from her eyes and entwined her tail in his. Atlas stayed in this moment for a while, but then had to say one last emotional goodbye before he flew out into the sky, out of Tyloa.

I have to do this. I have to find my friends and find this ominous cave.

I can finally be the hero.

chapter eight

[image]

Rain splashed angrily down on Atlas's scales as tears dripped from his eyes, joining the party of water that was currently pouring helplessly on the ground.

Atlas's blood was pumping quickly, his wings screaming at him in agony. But he couldn't give up. He couldn't leave his friends to suffer danger while he ignored them and continued on his own quest.

It had been nearly two hours of straight flying since he had left Tyloa, and he barely knew where he was going. Atlas took some deep breaths and focused his mind on his previous vision, attempting to remember every detail that he could.

The SeaWing kingdom was far behind them, the sun was high in the east, shining brightly in their faces. And the dragons had turned to the left, which must be the North, Atlas pondered. While he knew he was probably very wrong, he thought he might as well give it a go... it was all he had to work on.

Based on his pathetic thought process, he guessed the rogue SeaWings lived in the Sky kingdom...

That's north, his mind said matter of factly.

So's the IceWing kingdom, Another side of his brain argued.

Shut up Atlas's brain snarled back. *No-one but IceWings can live there dummy.*

And then his mind was quiet. Atlas hovered in mid air for a few moments, allowing the cold, rainy wind to wash over him as his breaths slowed and he became calm. Everything was peaceful.

Well... Nearly.

Atlas yelped in shock, exasperating pain swelled over in his mind, taking control of all his thoughts.

Not... again...

But those were the last words he could form in his mind before another vision came marching on in, disrupting anything that may have been going on before.

But this vision was the most confusing and shocking thing Atlas could ever think of.

Atlas was suddenly teleported into a small, dim cave, he looked down and saw his talons, but his figure was fading like a hallucination. The cave was nearly empty, and about the size of a Jade Mountain classroom. Atlas couldn't help but feel scared himself, yet he wasn't really there. But it felt like it. Screams of anger were heard from a distance, the dark shadows cast a feeling of depression, Atlas knew this was the cave of the rogue SeaWings.

Sunset was the only one in the cave, sitting on the dusty rock ground, and she was... crying. Not crying from pain or sadness or loneliness or rejection. But from stress and from... *love.*

Atlas felt a feeling of emotion fill him, but it kept coming and coming until he was overflowing.

"I just can't take it anymore, I have to decide." Sunset mumbled through sobs, all Atlas wanted to do was sit down and comfort her, but he knew it would be no use.

"But... whoever I pick, the other will be heartbroken."

Atlas had a strong temptation to look away, to stop listening. He had a feeling he wouldn't want to know what she would say next, but he couldn't look away, he couldn't close his ears. He was wrapped.

"Atlas is just so funny and playful, we've had such great moments together. And I know he loves me, but our group is just so frustrating." Sunset buried her snout further in her talons and sighed, but Atlas winced.

"I love Atlas, but I also love Droplet. Cosmo has feelings for Atlas... Well, I think... But Atlas... He's just so confusing. Sometimes he's like a broken book, pages spread out on the floor, just waiting for you to examine. But sometimes, he's closed. Sealed shut with a lock and will never let you in and *why do I feel like this cave is messing with my brain?!*" Sunset yelled quietly and began pacing.

"I just wish I could love them both, but that's just impossible! Droplet is caring and sweet, but so is Atlas! Uuughh!" Sunset raised her talons in the air dramatically and wiped the tear streaks from her snout.

"I just wish Atlas had come with us, and I wish we weren't all separated in these stupid caves!" And with that, Sunset kicked the cave wall and slouched back to her original spot, her head falling in heartache.

Atlas was wrenched back into reality, and, thankfully, still hovering mid-air. Atlas's snout dropped far as he relived the vision in his brain, time and time again.

She still loves me?

That was the only thought that would cycle in Atlas's mind. But then one more thought joined the spiral.

Do I still love her?

Atlas's brain stopped as if it had hit an error. His heart beat strongly, making his whole body shiver.

Do I?

Atlas pondered on that for many moments after the thought popped in his brain. Cosmo had been on his heart for some time, but had he ever really stopped loving his Miss. Midnight? Atlas had a heartwarming flashback to that moment as tears swelled in his eyes uncontrollably.

"Okay then Mr. Rainbow." She hid another laugh and this time he whacked her with his colorful wings.

"Hey! That's not nice! – ok, I guess it's true, but if you get to call me that, I get to call you Miss. Midnight, deal?" Sunset thought about it for a bit, then laughed, "Ok, deal. Mr. Rainbow." He chuckled. "Deal, Miss. Stunning Midnight."

Atlas had to save her now. He had never stopped loving Sunset, and he couldn't live if any of his friends suffered any longer in captivity. He sped through the air and examined the ground below.

Okay, I'm looking for a random ominous cave that's probably not easy to find but I'm sure I can handle it.

Atlas chuckled at his own joke but that feeling didn't settle for long. Jade Mountain towered ahead of him and he had a lightning thought.

Maybe I already know where to find them.

chapter nine

[image]

Had it really been under our noses the whole time?

Atlas scanned the towering school in front of him. Jade Mountain. Atlas felt a gushing feeling wash over him. He was home.

Don't be silly, a voice at the back of his mind reasoned. *All of your childhood memories are back at the Pantala camp,* that's *your home.*

Atlas smiled.

But all my favourite *memories are here.*

If he was being totally honest, ever since starting his year at the Academy, his brain's sensible voice had become much more faint, not that it was very loud in the first place. But something (or some*one*) at Jade Mountain had influenced his reckless side, making it grow like a tree that had been force-fed bags of fertiliser.

The SilkWing circled the area, searching desperately for any sign of a secret entrance, any little hole that was big enough for a dragon... or seven. But something forcefully bashed into him as Atlas winced. A feral bird swooped down on him, pecking at his scales madly while attempting to dodge any attack Atlas attempted on him, and in the end he had whacked the bird away with such force that it made a sound so much like an *oof* that Atlas nearly burst out laughing.

Except he couldn't settle for long; there was a task at hand.

"What are you doing?"

Atlas nearly jumped inches through the air and swirled around. Standing behind him was someone he would never have dreamed of seeing for a long time.

"Droplet?"

"Yes... pretty sure that's my name. Or did you forget me?"

Atlas was stunned, how in the *moons* had Droplet known here was there? There was no way that he just randomly assumed that after nearly a week or so Atlas would just come strolling by randomly and be in this spot at this exact time.

"H-How?" He asked, ignoring Droplet's question.

"How what?"

"How did you know I was here? Surely you couldn't have guessed? Also..." Atlas stopped himself. How was the best way to ask Droplet '*Have you stumbled across a secret cave in Jade Mountain? Because, sorry to say... but all our friends are currently trapped there'* without really saying it?

"I saw you?" Droplet gave Atlas a stupidly confused expression as though he had just asked if cows could fly.

"You- wait what?"

"I saw you. You know... with my eyes?"

"Oh... yeah, of course, I uh-"

Atlas silently pondered. What had he been thinking? Maybe something that you would read in a book about heroes? Like when the cheerful side character had seen the future and knew you were coming?

Yeah... Something like that...

But suddenly Atlas's mind clicked back to his job, his mission. How could he do that? His friends were stuck in mortal danger while he was just having a willy - nilly chat with Droplet.

"Uh... see you soon?" Atlas didn't know what to say, he didn't want to sound like he was terrified, and he had many reasons why.

"Sure. Um, and say hi to Cosmo for me will you?" And with that Droplet zoomed away leaving a heaving trail of wind flying behind him.

So... His brain piped up. *What now?*

Atlas flew in closer to the mountain for a closer look, hoping to catch a glimpse of anything that might be somewhat helpful. Snails scurried into their shells as he came near, a few of them even tumbled despairingly off the cliff side. Atlas watched them fly through the air and he could almost imagine them screaming '*wheee*' before they hit the solid ground.

After around thirty minutes of looking, all Atlas wanted to do was give up. His wings were screaming at him as they painfully throbbed, and his eyes began drooping slowly to a close. Atlas only just then remembered how little sleep he'd had in the past two or three days of flying, basically none. But he also noticed how hungry he was. His stomach churned, pleading for any type of food, but Atlas had to persevere. Hey, he couldn't just leave his friends hanging.

But then Atlas spotted something. Atlas felt like a cold washcloth had been draped over the back of his neck. He turned around ever so slowly to see a SeaWing, slowly emerging from Agate Mountain, peering around the corners to make sure no one had seen him. The dragon looked even more battered then in his dream. He had a scar running down his neck and a fresh black eye like he must've been in a fight very recently. Maybe with a vicious LeafWing who could control plants?

Atlas knew this must be it, his whole body vibrated in anticipation. He'd found them. He'd actually done it. He'd actually just randomly stumbled across a dragon giving everything away, so basically he'd done nothing!

Very heroic.

Atlas chuckled to himself quietly, but his laughter died down in a matter of moments. He'd been seen. All the blood drained from Atlas's face as the SeaWing stretched his claws, preparing to kill.

Atlas had basically no experience with fighting a scoundress SeaWing, so he guessed he'd find out?

Atlas was just about finished daydreaming when the SeaWing leapt through the air and dug his claws into Atlas's scales. Atlas yelped in surprise and jumped away from the dragon trying to think of a battle plan in mere milliseconds.

Plan: Fight. Backup plan: Run.

Atlas pinned his detailed plan in his head like a sticky note, and flexed his claws, ready for battle.

"Come at me."

That was all he could (and had to) say. Because just like a broken record, the SeaWing leapt at him again, but Atlas sidestepped him and felt a gush of air fly beside him and the SeaWing crashed painfully into Jade Mountain.

"Ouch, that'll leave a mark"

This was Atlas's life plan. Make jokes. Be funny. If you're not laughing then all your bad memories would come back to haunt you, and you'd feel depressed. At least that was true from Atlas's past experience. But push your worries away with humor. Your past will never forsake you, but you can try to force it away with some jokes.

The dragon looked dizzy but was about the try for another go, but Atlas stopped him.

"Hold on, I have two questions. First off, what's your name? I shouldn't fight someone without knowing who they are! That's ridiculous!"

Though, if Atlas was being honest, he couldn't care less, he was just trying to distract him so after he'd answered Atlas's stupid question he could lunge in for an attack while the SeaWing wasn't expecting it.

The dragon huffed while hovering in mid air. "Jetstream. Can we just get on with this? Demolishing you would simply make my day!" Jetstream said with a gravely, yet faltering voice.

"Hold on..." Atlas sneered. "I said I have *two* questions. In case you didn't know, I've only asked one."

Jetstream growled and stepped forward, Atlas could tell he didn't have long, the SeaWing was itching for a fight.

"Why are we fighting? I could just be a random delivery guy, minding my own business."

"Do I care? Like I said, it'd make my day to kill you, so can we *please* get on with it!" Jetstream's snout flared but Atlas kept on going.

"You haven't answered my question though."

"I don't care!" And with that Jetstream leapt in for another attack, but it was exactly what Atlas predicted. He slid under him and sliced Jetstream from the back. The SeaWing howled in despair and Atlas could tell he was losing consciousness.

"I don't want to kill you!" Atlas called back as he zoomed past and headed for the opening to Agate Mountain's secret cave. He quickly stepped in and closed the door with a press of a red button (Atlas was nervous to do so, big red buttons were never promising) and the opening closed as Jetstream screamed a cry and rage.

"Well, that took care of that" Atlas began limping through the tunnel, wincing at his newly cut injuries. He'd taken some hard hits. The cave was dimly lit, Atlas could only see five feet in front of him, but he couldn't tell if that was a result of how dark it was or because he was slowly becoming unconscious from blood loss. But Atlas pressed on, stumbling through, wondering if there was even an end to this path.

Suddenly Atlas's breath was stolen away in the wind as his stomach climbed up into his throat.

"No!"

That was the only sound in the cave but it made Atlas feel sick.

That cry was from Sunset...

Which meant he had been too slow.

chapter ten

[image]

The cave was like a maze.

Atlas felt guilt and dread build up in him through every turn until he felt outweighed, until he felt like all he wanted to do was collapse into the ground and sobb until the world ended. Maybe if he fell down now, he would wake up and everything would be okay.

But that was just a stupid wish. Dreams don't come true, they only make you hope for something that's not real and drag you through pain and suffering. Happiness and love is a trap, it only makes the sadness harder to deal with.

But Atlas had to push through. He knew how crushing the next 24 hours would be. He'd kept it a secret. From everyone. But it was time to reveal the unknown.

Three years ago, Atlas felt destroyed. It felt like his limbs were falling off and he would never be able to reattach them.

"Why me? Why does life have to be so impossible?"

Atlas stared at his mothers grave. She was buried an hour ago but Atlas couldn't bring himself to leave. He'd lost everyone.

But the worst part was, he didn't even know how she had died. He'd arrived home to find a gathering around a tree. Most of the dragons were SilkWings but there were a few others too. Instantly Atlas had felt like he wasn't supposed to look into it. His heart pounded painfully against his scales and his body felt like he'd been dragging weights for an entire day. But he didn't know why.

'Don't look' His brain warned. But curiosity won.

As soon as the crowd noticed him approaching, they looked at him

with such grief that he thought someone had died.

But that can't be true.

And that was where he was wrong.

In front of a large oak tree was a sign, and only one large word was engraved on it. Atlas knew he didn't want to read it but his eyes were too fast.

Cecropia

Atlas had instantly fallen down on his talons in despair.

"No..." Atlas whispered while the tears flooded his vision. His brain felt heavy as he tried to focus on the dirt underneath him.

"NO!" Atlas screamed again and his voice cracked into weeping.

Everything after that was a blur. He had felt dozens of dragons comforting him, trying to talk to him. But he didn't hear what they were saying. He didn't even care. He just wanted his mother back. He longed to feel her warm scales wrapped around him while her soothing voice comforted him when he was sad.

But that would never happen again.

"I never want to feel this way again." Atlas choked. "Ever."

Atlas grabbed a withered leaf from the ground as an idea popped up in his mind. The leaf was yellow and broken, exactly how he felt. It was perfect.

"I enchant this leaf to vaguely show me if I'll ever feel this horrible again."

And so the vision crept in.

Atlas was only shown snippets. Atlas carrying an unconscious black dragon, both with horrifying wounds covering their bodies and blood trickling to the floor. A group of dragonets crying and staggering through a cave. SeaWings with stolen SandWing and

RainWing venom, preparing to use it on their victims. It looked like a fantasy. A fantasy that Atlas hoped he would die before experiencing.

So even if Atlas felt like a piece of him was being stolen away with every step, he would still fight to get to his friends. If he got there and his body was no more and he was forced to deal with the pain forever, it would be worth it because they would be safe. The pain would leave eventually, and Atlas would be able to get up and continue life. He would only have to be broken for a little while.

After what felt like hours of constant torture, he finally found the place. The SeaWings were crowding around Sundew, trying to force her to join the others in a large cage. She looked tired and in pain, but Atlas knew she wouldn't step down.

Atlas didn't have to try hard to find Sunset, her glimmering black scales were covered in bruises and scars. Her battle wrung body looked nothing like it had days ago. All of his friends looked like they were close to passing out, but Sunset caught his eye and her whole face lit up immediately. Atlas wanted to run and wrap his wings around her, but he had a job to do. But he couldn't do it by himself, he would have to find a way to unleash his friends somehow.

"Hang in there?" Atlas tried his best to mouth to her, but she got the message and nodded.

Atlas didn't have any sort of plan, so he winged it. Which was the stupid option.

Atlas didn't know if he was being extremely brave or extremely stupid, but he snuck up behind the SeaWing, using all his willpower to be silent and whispered in his ear, "How's life?"

The SeaWing swirled around is shock, his snout open wide in terror. Well, at least Atlas hoped it was terror.

But now that he'd startled the SeaWing, he had a chance to attack. But he knew that was stupid. He couldn't fight alone, it was a suicidal act.

Atlas sprinted to the cage while the SeaWing was still dumbfounded, but Atlas was smart enough to know he wouldn't stay that way for long, he didn't have much time.

Atlas studied the cage as he approached it. There didn't seem to be anything too drastic that kept it sealed, only a single small lock. Atlas looked back and was relieved to see the SeaWing fighting Sundew again, though the SeaWing was heading towards Atlas, Sundew was just holding him back.

Without hesitation, Atlas shoved his claw up the lock and began working on it. Adrenaline pumped through his body as the seconds clicked away, but there was no use. Sweat dripped down his snout, any second the SeaWing would break free from Sundew's hold and come barreling towards him. But the Atlas suddenly felt like he had been whacked in the face with a fish. He was a damn *animus!*

"I enchant this cage to open and for my friends inside to be healed and ready to fight."

The door of the cage clicked open and Atlas sighed with relief. They obviously didn't expect an animus to come to the rescue.

Half of Atlas's mind was telling him to be careful, that was too easy. But unless there was no exploding bombs or psyco land dolphins hidden for intruders, everything should be okay.

Atlas was knocked over instantly and Atlas knew it was a trap, his animus magic wasn't enough. But when he opened his eyes in panic, he wasn't in a trap. He was in Sunset's killing bear hug.

"I missed you so much."

"I missed you too." Atlas felt all the blood rush to his snout. "I never stopped looking."

"How'd you know we'd got captured?"

Ah. Atlas thought. *How do I answer?*

"Let's just say I have a lot to explain. But now's not the time."

Atlas broke free from Sunset's grasp and bulldozed towards the SeaWing. But someone stepped in his way.

"Bumblebee?"

Bumblebee smiled slyly and continued to step in his way when he tried desperately to get into the fight.

"Yes, that's my name."

"What are you doing? Aren't you going to help?"

"No."

"No?"

By this point Atlas was beginning to feel confused. Why wouldn't Bumblebee move? Was she trying to sabotage the fight?

Atlas gasped.

"No... No, *please* Bumblebee, not you."

The words chanted in his brain, *'And one abandoned by a friend*'. Atlas had sort of forgotten about the prophecy, but why was Bumblebee a part of it?

"You think I cared about you? Cute."

Atlas's snout dropped what felt like inches. That didn't sound like Bumblebee. At *all.* Bumblebee was kind, smart and empathetic... What *happened?*

"What's gotten into you?" Atlas fumed as he sliced past her, leaving her staggering back in pain from her new scar.

She lunged for him but he stepped back and dodged her attack. She snarled from the ground and jumped back onto her talons and bared her claws.

The battle raged outside of Atlas's vision, but his mind would only focus on Bumblebee and what she was about to do next. He didn't

notice two more SeaWings barging in through the cave door to join the fight. He wouldn't have even noticed Cosmo unconscious on the ground if it weren't for Sunset and Foxglove.

"NO!"

Atlas turned his head so fast he would have sworn he could have broken a bone.

"Oh no..."

Cosmo lay helplessly on the ground, a deep red gash reached from the side of her neck to her front talons. Foxglove was huddled over her body, tears flowing down and dripping off the stone floor. Sunset was standing angrily in front of them as a guard with her SandWing tail barb high at the ready.

Atlas ran to Cosmo's side as fear began crawling over him like spiders. He completely abandoned Bumblebee in the mess but she was nowhere to be seen now. Atlas felt like he was going to lose his mind at this point with Bumblebee. Something definitely wasn't right.

Atlas gently shook her side, trying to wake her up. Nothing happened. He quickly reached to check her pulses, but it was faint, but that meant there was a chance. Although the chances were not in their favor, there was a little hope that she might live.

"There's a chance she might live." Atlas choked out through tears as he examined the cuts and scars on Foxglove. There was no one here who hadn't been beaten up, these scars would always stay attached in memory or on their scales. Scars that will remind them of this tragic day.

Atlas steadily stood back up, wincing at the loss of blood and blinking through the stars in his vision. He placed himself towards Sunset with a look of destruction on his face.

"There's hope. She might live."

That was all Atlas had to say to lift her spirits. Her eyes welled with tears and she faced the battle once more. They were ready.

This may not look like a battle where dragons die and suffer this much. But it is. These SeaWings are unnaturally strong. Atlas didn't know how, but these 7 super strength rogue SeaWings were fighting a group of dragonets. What chance did they have?

I have cried all my tears, Atlas thought.

Now all that is left is anger.

chapter eleven

[image]

"It's okay, I'm here. I'll always be here."

Sunset's soothing voice lured him back into reality. He looked into her forest green eyes and smiled gratefully. She turned away cautiously and faced the battle next to him, that was how it was meant to be. They were meant to be together.

Atlas brushed his wingtip against Sunset's as he stepped forward and began eyeing off one of the SeaWings.

"You know, my life was actually better before you guys ruined it."

The SeaWing snarled at the comment and bared his claws preparing to lunge.

"Your life will be miserable until this prophecy ends Atlas, get used to it."

The first question that came to mind was '*how do you know my name?*' but Atlas wouldn't have had enough time to ask it even if he wanted to. The SeaWing barreled past him and towards Sunset and before either of them even had time to process what was happening, the SeaWing sliced his claw into Sunset's side and she gasped in pain.

"Sunset! Are you okay?"

"I'm fine! Don't lose focus!"

Fury exploded inside Atlas and he cut through the air while the SeaWing was still distracted and pinned him to the ground.

"Nobody touches my friends."

"I-"

The SeaWing didn't have time to finish because all of a sudden the cave started shaking like crazy and stones tumbled down the sides. The cave was about to collapse.

If Atlas was smart, he would have fended off the SeaWings from attacking his friends in the chaos, but everyone knew intelligence wasn't his main trait.

"Sunset let's go!"

Sunset stared longingly at him from the ground and then at Cosmo, blinking rapidly.

"I can't leave her here..."

"Well you go! I can't risk losing you. I'll carry her out. Just make sure all our friends make it out safely. I got this."

Sunset stared at him in disbelief and quickly rushed to embrace him in her arms.

"Don't die. Please?"

Atlas entwined his tail with hers. "I won't. Promise."

Then she rushed away with tears in her eyes and began pushing everyone out the door. Atlas would spend all day looking at her if he could, but he had a job to do and a promise to keep.

Atlas rushed to Cosmo's side and promised Foxglove she would be okay, he nodded and ran out the door, snatching only one last look at the love of his life. Atlas dug his talons under Cosmo's wings and lifted her into his arms. He trudged along the cave, trying his hardest to dodge the falling rocks and stalactites, but in the end, luck wasn't on his side as the stone crashed into his head and he crumpled to the floor, trying to cover Cosmo - while barely conscious - from any harm.

When Atlas woke up, Sunset was peering over his face with her wide hopeful eyes staring at him. And the first thing Atlas noticed was her huge gasp and her tackling hug.

"You said you wouldn't die," Sunset whispered, "You lied."

Atls chuckled and pulled away.

"I mean, technically I didn't, I'm still alive... I think."

Atlas sat up and looked around him. Cosmo and Foxglove were sitting separate from the group, talking awkwardly, but the sight of Cosmo sitting up and breathing was enough for Atlas to choke.

"She's alive."

Sunset grinned and nodded, but her delight didn't last long. Atlas watched as she grimaced and grasped her side, attempting to take deep breaths and breath through the pain.

"What's wrong?" Atlas rushed to her aid and tried to make sure she didn't faint.

"Nothing," she said through a gasp. "Just my wounds, it's fine though."

"You sure?"

"Positive." Sunset tried to smile but it was weak.

"You don't look so good," Atlas said after examining her scratches, "You told me you were okay, I believed you."

Sunset opened her mouth and closed it again, obviously lost for words.

"Atlas, I was fine, you needed to concentrate, I didn't want you - " Then Sunset blacked out and fell into his arms.

"Bumblebee! Come quick, Sunset's just fainted!" Atlas looked desperately around for her but a flashback of her previous words struck him like lightning. "Oh." Foxglove rushed to their side with Cosmo leaning on him for support.

"Atlas... I'm sorry about Bumblebee, it's not your fault."

Atlas sighed and looked up, staring at the sky while wishing for answers. He just wished life was easy.

"Something wasn't right with that. I know Bumblebee... Well, at least I think I do." Foxglove looked at Atlas apologetically and he smiled back, hoping it was a good disguise.

"We'll find her on the quest. I'm sure of it." A cloud shadow covered Foxglove's facing making the conversation seem more spooky. "But we found some answers on the journey to the cave. But I should wait until Sunset wakes up to tell you together."

Atlas took a deep breath and hoped Sunset wouldn't be out long. "Okay. I don't know if I can trust anyone anymore but I'll try to trust your word."

Foxglove looked at Cosmo and she smiled and, surprisingly, wrapped Atlas in a hug and whispered in his ear, "Don't. Move."

"I - wait what?" Atlas used every bit of his self control to stay still, but out of his sight he could hear running and cries for help but his consciousness blurred everything together and he began to feel dizzy from the knockout earlier.

Cosmo must have obviously noticed his body feeling lighter and whispered, "Please don't faint. I need you to play along." Then she began to collapse and Atlas felt a moment of panic but soon remembered her words, play along, so he followed her lead and pretended to pass out, and even though his curiosity levels were so high, he stayed dead still, hoping that whatever dangers that had distubred them would pass by them.

And for once in his life he was lucky.

Silence crept over the valley and Atlas slowly lifted his snout and scanned the area. Nothing. No enemies and no friends. Atlas sat up and beckoned Cosmo to do the same.

"They're gone. Hopefully that's a good thing." Cosmo said as she began to stand up and winced from muscle pain. "Oh," Cosmo piped up, "there's a note here. That's dangerous..." Cosmo murmured as

she began to read.

"What's it say?"

"'SeaWing Palace. Atlas Magic'"

A shiver began to crawl through Atlas's scales as he began to realise what they were talking about.

"Sunset must have told them. I was on a mission to the SeaWing palace before you guys got caught, they obviously didn't want me to go alone." Atlas started to feel relieved at this fact. If he was being genuinely honest, he had been frightened to go by himself. But now his friends would be with him and any dangers he would have faced, he would have faced them with his team.

Cosmo snorted. "They must have taken Sunset, we should try and catch up to them"

Atlas nodded and lifted into the sky, Cosmo at his tail.

"Let's finish this prophecy once and for all."

SAD NOTE

Hey guys, I have some news. Writing Encased in Shell hasn't been so fun anymore and I've been so busy with school and life that it's taking a long time for me to write it. But I promise I will not discontinue it for your guys sakes, even though it's crossed my mind multiple times, I will finish it since I have started it. So I've decided I'm going to skip a few scenes I was going to use, just to make it end sooner, so I'll completely skip Atlas's side quest and go straight to the end, this also means chapters might be longer but less of them.

I'm so sorry about this, I've also been planning my first actual book that I'm hoping to publish. I also want to finish planning and writing at least 1 of my manuscripts by the year I start university. So most of my writing time is being spent on that but I'll try and continue this also because I know a lot of you guys love reading this and I personally have enjoyed knowing that you're enjoying it and commenting <3

Next chapter is in construction, hopefully it'll be out soon.

chapter twelve

[image]

"We're nearly there." Atlas comforted, clutching his side after the battle with Puffin. Atlas had trusted her, but she must have known he had been listening in that dream he had. She'd given him so little information and gave his friends so much pain. But his story would have to remain a secret, Atlas didn't know for how long, but one day, hopefully, the truth would be revealed. The only details Puffin

had given him was that an old NightWing had read the future, knowing this prophecy would happen. The NightWing gave the order that the next Animus of the next tribe would have to give powers to a certain hybrid.

And that hybrid just happened to be me.

"We have to get her to the CloudWing healers." Cosmo pointed out. Sunset was heavy in his arms, scars and wounds covered half of her body, she had fainted from excruciating pain. Tears continued to roll down his snout, non stop since they had left the palace. Atlas wished this mission was easy. Prophecy or not, he just wanted a good life. Atlas closed his eyes, attempting to focus on flying and block out the wingbeats of his friends. At least he wasn't going through this alone, he'd never get through it if he was.

"Keep coming little dragon. A surprise awaits for you soon enough. A little gift from me to you and your friends."

There was that voice again.

It had been whispering to Atlas ever since they had left the SeaWing kingdom. Atlas hoped what it had been saying were lies, but Atlas couldn't help but think otherwise.

"Don't you think it'll be fun to show you around the last place you'll be yourself."

Atlas stopped.

"Atlas?" Foxglove asked from behind. "Are you-"

"I'm fine." Atlas snapped back, more harshly than he had meant to. "Sorry, just... nevermind."

Cosmo looked at him quizzically before looking away at the horizon. "Tell us."

Atlas felt his stomach drop inches. How could he tell them? And what had the voice meant by, *'the last place you'll be yourself'?*

Atlas took in a sharp breath before telling them about the

mysterious voice. They were good listeners, but at the same time, the more Atlas spoke, the more nauseous he felt.
When Atlas stopped talking there was an awkward silence. He half expected them to get mad at him for staying quiet, but Atlas wouldn't have blamed them.

"Wow, tha-... that's a lot."

Cosmo looked towards him cautiously as though he might turn into some monster, but that was the worst he got.

"You're not mad?" Atlas questioned, keeping his head low and staring at Sunset before blinking away.

"Why would we be? It's not your fault, and who knows, it might give us clues."

Atlas felt his heart beating against his scales as he sighed. "Yeah... maybe."

"I think not"

That time the voice rumbled outside of his head and everyone gasped in fright.

"Okay then, maybe not." Atlas said in a small voice, looking around for any sign of who was speaking. But no one was there. It was like the voice was speaking through thin air.

"Guards, bring them here." They heard him say quietly, obviously not speaking to them.

"How-?"

Atlas had no time to finish. He instantly felt the wind change before he heard a crunch of bones. His own bones. Barely conscious, Atlas wailed in pain before he was engulfed in a black void.

In endless darkness.

"She's gone."

Atlas woke up immediately. He still couldn't see anything making him quickly think that he hadn't yet opened his eyes, but he was now fully conscious. Slowly his vision increased and was able to see a slight outline of each of his friends, but it was barely anything. It was as though a firefly was circling above his head, giving him the small gift of sight, but Atlas felt as though it would fly away into the void any second.

Atlas groaned in agony as his head throbbed without mercy. He clutched it as weird visions swirled in his head, a result of the magic presence surrounding them.

"Atlas! You're finally awake! I-" Sunset doubled over in pain, gasping at the pain of her wounds. When she had recovered, she heavily sighed. "I didn't know if you *would* wake up."

Suddenly Atlas felt guilty. Even though he knew it wasn't his fault, he still felt horrible for making her worry. Atlas shivered from fear and cold as a sudden feeling of terror washed over him. his shiver wouldn't stop. He kept shaking uncontrollably as the voice began speaking from his mouth.

"Your friend has been taken." The deep voice echoed. "Don't expect to be greeted joyfully when you see her again. She's one of my subjects now."

Atlas stopped shaking and collapsed. His vision blurred. Atlas didn't get it. How had everything shifted so badly? What only felt like a moment ago, they had been flying back to Eden, sure they had some worries, but in just a flicker of light they had ended up here, everyone more bruised and scared than before, Cosmo was gone and they didn't know what had happened to her. They could only hope.

But by now Atlas knew hoping wasn't going to solve their problems.

"Subjects?" Foxglove squeaked.

The voice in the abyss laughed, but without humour. A laugh filled with cruelty.

"Indeed. Soon all of you will be too. Then who can stop me? In moments you'll be obeying all my orders."

"Or you'll all be dead."

Atlas felt like he was going to pass out. He scanned the room but saw nothing. Felt nothing. It was so... strange. Atlas could usually sense the presence of someone nearby, but this was different. Magic had certainly be worked here.

"Try your best." Sundew snarled and bared her claws. Atlas jumped skittishly. He had honestly forgotten Sundew was there which was unlike Atlas. He rubbed his head, wondering if maybe he was on the verge on losing his memory. Or his senses.

"Sundew." The voice chuckled menacingly. "I remember you."

Sundews face turned pale for a second before she could recover. "The Breath of Evil is back is it? We destroyed you long ago. We killed the man who kept you running. How are you still alive?" She growled.

Silence.

Atlas hated silence. It meant thinking. Something Atlas personally wasn't great at. But it meant the voice was thinking of the most horrible thing to say to destroy any bit of hope they had left. Rip it apart, bit by bit.

"Oh yes, you certainly destroyed the man. But now all that's left is the monster. I'm not the Breath of Evil. I've just used my powers to make me like it. I can now control everyone I want to. Who would like to be my second puppet?"

"I'm guessing Cosmo was the first?" Sunset piped in, now standing up prepared for any attack that might dare to come near.

"Oh the RainWing? Oh no, I have her here with me. But I'm sure you know who I'm talking about."

A figure stepped out from the darkness and into eyesight. She was only slightly shorter than he was but at first glance Atlas knew who

it was.

"Bumblebee."

As you saw from my last 'not really' chapter, I've been thinking about discontinuing this book. I decided to fully skip Atlas's side quest and make longer but less chapters, but they're also going to be somewhat rushed. So I've sort of just dived right into the ending which is why everything has happened so quickly. If I decide not to discontinue (the decision will be made based on how many people continue to read this book so if you want more than comment saying so, if I get at least 2 - 3 comments then I will continue writing) there will likely be around 2 chapters left.

I'm really sorry about this, I wrote why this is happening in the previous chapter.

Love you guys <3